

[Mr. B. E. Jenkins]

1

[Belief's & Customs -?] Folk Stuff FOLKLORE

Mrs. Ada Davis P. W.

McLennan County, Texas.

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Page No. 1 Reference

Interview with Mr. B. E. Jenkins, Waco McLennan County, Texas.

Mr. B. E. Jenkins was born in Georgia, 1859. Twelve families left Rock Mart, Georgia in 1862 and came to Texas in ox-wagons. They were four months making the trip. One ox was lost on the road. Mr. Joseph Jenkins pulled in place of the ox for five miles, until they could buy another. They paid about ten dollars for an ox. The colony was led by B. L. Dehay, whose grand-son is Waco City Secretary. They came to East Waco and crossed in a ferry boat, where the new county bridge is, at the foot of Washington Avenue. They went to the Bob Wilson farm, now on Fifteenth and Herring, where Mr. Jenkins built a double log house of cedar. Mr. Jenkins later moved to Bosqueville where he remained until the Civil war broke out.

War was brewing in Georgia at the time thry sold out to come to Texas. They thought they would probably miss the war by coming to Texas. However they had been in Texas only

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a short time, about four months, when they were all conscripted, except a crippled man. They had to go back to Georgia to join the home regiment. The men went back to Georgia on horse back. Mr Jenkins' mother, grand-mother and two aunts with five little boys from eight to twelve years of age were left in Texas. Most of the slaves in Georgia were sold. When the war broke out, Mr. Jenkins and his mother moved to the old Blocker farm which is now the summer home of Wm. Cameron on Bosque Bluff. With the help of Mr. Blocker, the slaves ran the farm. The farm was managed by an old colored man named Lewis Friday. Every one called his wife "aunty Creasy," she would steal roasting-ears and baked pies and sweet potatoes and slip them to the boys unmindful of old Lewis. The five boys grew up like baby bears on the Bosque hills and cedar brakes especially Lover's Leap. C12 - [???] Texas 2 The cedar brakes were full of wild Spanish goats which the boys tried to catch. They would hide up on Lover's Leap bluff and holler, the goats would jump over the bluff, and even though the boys were like squirrels, they could not catch them. They would climb up the bluff from the bottom and dare the goat and each other to jump. It was very dangerous, because the bluff was from fifty to seventy-five feet high. They would have just too hold on the [cliff?] cliff, but they were little dare devils. The cattle and horses would run in every direction from the scent of Indians and thus warn the people. But the Indians around Waco were friendly. The white bushwhackers stole during the war. The settlers had to bury meat to hide it from them. His family ran out of salt during the war, so they dug up the dirt floor of the old smoke house boiled it and skimmed off the top to get the salt. They used parched wheat and corn meal for coffee. The second year of the war, they got coffee at Richey's store on Bridge Street. About one-thousand Tonkaway Indians were [located?] at the Bosque Bridge for about two years during the war. One very cold day, an Indian squaw came to the Jenkin's home with two papooses, one naked and blankets around the other. Mrs. Jenkins put her dress on the squaw and dressed the children like white people. The next day, the squaw returned with the dress ripped up and made into a blanket.

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The boys [played?] with the Indians every day at that time Mrs. [Dannie?] Sparks was a girl and played with them. The Indians taught them how to make a short bow and arrow. They were lots of white hopping-grasshoppers which had no wings. The Indians would catch these by buckets full and fry them crisp, put salt on them and eat them with pancakes. They would cook stacks of pancakes and pans of grasshoppers. The Indians would beg the boys to eat them, but they couldn't stand the idea. Turkeys, deer and prairie chickens were plentiful but they had to go to Coryell county for buffalo meat to eat. Dye for clothing was made from dry cedar and shumate 3 buffalo meat to eat. Dye for clothing was made from dry cedar and shumate bark. The spinning wheel and looms were used to make cloth for clothing. They raised a patch of cotton and a garden. The seed was picked from the cotton by hand, then the cotton was carded, spun and wove into cloth. The boys went barefooted and wore a big, long shirt something like a cotton-picking sack, they wore only one garment until they were grown. They had no trouble about dressing. They wore underwear in winter but no shoes till after winter, and it had snowed some.

Mr. Jenkin's mother bought green coffee and had to parch it in a skillet on the fire-place, then beat it with pestle. Coffee sold for four dollars a pound about the close of the War. There were no wood cook-stoves. Mrs. Jennings bought a "four-eyed" cook-stove from Mr. Richey, at the time there were only four houses on Rat Row, which is now Bridge Street. She learned how to "fire up that stove", Mrs. Clinker, who lived in the edge of the cedar brake on what is now nineteenth Street at the old Tom Price home, got a stove and wouldn't use it. She sent for Mrs. Jenkins to show her how to "fire up" the stove and warm it up gradually as it might explode.

Two years after the war, Jenkins bought a farm, from Price Standifer, near [Speegleville?]. He built a log house which had two large rooms and a shed, with puncheon-floor and clap board [rood?], fastened with peg fasteners. The doors were made out of [puncheon?] boards, and there were wooden hinges; the windows had wooden shutters. There were two plank doors with wooden hinges and one window, but there were-not any porches

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or steps. They had home made furniture. The bed had rope cord for spring. Their bed was somewhat better than most of the beds at that time, because it was a frame entirely separate from the wall. They used straw mattresses and feather beds to sleep on. They had just two home made chairs.

Mr. Jenkind married fifty-eight years ago. when he and his wife began housekeeping they started in a one-room log house and cook on the fireplace because there were very stoves at that time. Mr. Jenkins still 4 lives [on?] the Old Prather farm, on the hill above Lake Waco where highway number seven crosses highway numver sixty-seven.